

# Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project

## August 2004 Newsletter



### Improving Communications

The Corps has been reevaluating the Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project for nearly six years; finally, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. There are only five more months left for the project team to identify alternatives for flood and ecosystem protection, which will incorporate everything studied to date along the Truckee River in Nevada. However, the project study does not stop then! Between January and September there will be additional data to evaluate including project effects and mitigation requirements, and project details to fine tune before publishing the draft General Reevaluation Report (GRR) and environmental impact statement (EIS).

In anticipation of this long awaited occasion, the Corps is taking an active role in keeping the Community Coalition up to date on the project through monthly newsletters, and easier access to project information via our new website and a new e-mail address. The website includes dates of upcoming meetings, documents prepared to date, status of the project, maps, and much more. **Visit the new website at:**

[www.spk.usace.army.mil/projects/civil/truckeemeadows](http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/projects/civil/truckeemeadows)

**Our new e-mail address is:**

[TruckeeMeadows@spk.usace.army.mil](mailto:TruckeeMeadows@spk.usace.army.mil).

### What is the Project Community Coalition and How Can I Get Involved?

Your participation is critical to making this project a success! The project sponsors, with the cooperation of the Corps, formed the Community Coalition for the Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project, in order to ensure direct community input into the design of a project plan for flood and ecosystem protection along the Truckee River in Nevada. Anyone interested in knowing more about this project can become a Community Coalition member. The Community Coalition is a diverse group and includes over 25 local residences and business owners, 15 resource and regulatory

agencies, and members of the public.

Monthly project status meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the New Growth Room of the Washoe County Department of Water Resources in Reno. For more information regarding upcoming meetings, please visit the project website. To join the Community Coalition, contact us at our e-mail address.

### What is a GRR?

A GRR is not the sound of an angry animal but a General Reevaluation Report produced by the Corps after Congress has authorized a project. A GRR is necessary when Congress requests the Corps to re-evaluate a project that has been authorized but not yet constructed. In the case of the Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project, Congress authorized it back in 1988; however, the project was placed in deferred status in 1992 when changes in cost-sharing and benefit analyses left the project with more costs than benefits. In the years that followed, the local community requested Congress to have the flood problem evaluated again. In 1996, Congress directed the Corps to evaluate ecosystem restoration along the Truckee River and to re-look at the authorized project and determine if it is now feasible or whether a different plan should replace it. The document used to make this determination is the GRR. A draft GRR with supporting EIS should be available for review in the summer of 2005.

### Ecosystem Restoration Update

Restoration planning along the Truckee River, between I-395 and Wadsworth continues. The conceptual restoration

alternatives are currently being overlaid on the footprints of the flood control alternatives. The habitat acreages are determined and will be used to develop cost estimates that will be used to determine the best value restoration alternative(s).

The Corps is also working on another restoration project along the Truckee River. The McCarran Ranch Section 1135 Continuing Authorities Restoration Project (CAP) is continuing to prove to be an excellent example of the restoration methodology that can be applied for future restoration efforts on the lower Truckee River. The feasibility report for the McCarran project is nearing completion and several meetings between the Corps project delivery team and the project non-Federal sponsor, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), are scheduled in the upcoming months. The meetings will discuss results and lessons learned from TNC's pilot project that was constructed last fall and is currently being managed by TNC to establish the newly planted vegetation. TNC's past experience with the pilot project will be applied to the CAP project next year as plans and specifications are developed.

### **HEP Update**

The Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) for the downstream restoration is nearly complete! The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps use HEP to assess the benefits provided by ecosystem restoration. This method takes representative species that use certain types of habitat and determines the value of both the existing habitat and the proposed restored habitat. The difference between the two values gives us the restoration benefit. Habitat value is measured in habitat units that generally can be compared to each other even though the type of habitat varies. Calculations for existing habitat for the Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project have been completed, as well as calculations for potential

restoration scenarios. The Corps team will be taking these totals and running a series of combinations to identify the most cost-effective and incrementally justified restoration plans.

### **Real Estate Right of Entry Defined**

Over the last couple of years, some of you may have received a request letter from the Corps for right-of-entry onto your property. A right-of-entry is a minimal authorization from a private landowner to the United States to enter onto the owner's property. Such agreements are of short duration and are typically granted for a term of up to two years. Employees and contractors of the United States then perform activities (e.g., making cultural and biological surveys, boring holes for soil and water sampling) as may be necessary for a particular project such as the Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project. The effects of entry and authorized activities on private property, as well as those of vehicles traversing a particular parcel of land, must be recognized and carefully planned and carried out to minimize impacts. Corps staff that request these agreements are always available to explain the activities and findings. Owners granting entry onto their property deserve great credit for helping project planners develop the data needed to make the best choices for this flood damage reduction project effort.

### **Next Newsletter**

Coming up next month, update on cultural resources, results of the hydraulic model in downtown Reno, and an update on the hydraulic model in the Meadows reach!